

[News story: Food Waste Fund: £4 million awarded to cut food waste](#)

The government has awarded more than £4 million to four redistribution organisations across England to help overcome barriers to getting food currently going to waste onto people's plates.

The successful bids – from Fareshare, Company Shop Group, The Felix Project and Food Works Sheffield – will receive funding through the first tranche of a [£15 million scheme](#) launched in January by Environment Secretary Michael Gove.

The projects will enable existing food redistribution companies to take more surplus food from manufacturers and retailers and stop it going to waste. As part of the selection exercise, the projects had to put forward their proposals on how they would do this. Solutions include developing new supply routes from growers and local distributors, funding new lines and additional staff and increasing capacity for repackaging and labelling.

A further round of funding will focus on improving infrastructure for companies to redistribute even more of the estimated 100,000 tonnes of food – equating to 250 million meals a year – which is edible and readily available but goes uneaten. Instead, this food is currently sent away for generating energy from waste, anaerobic digestion or animal feed.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Food waste is unnecessary and morally unforgivable. We must end it, and our £15 million fund is a true game-changer in making that happen.

I am thrilled that this first round of funding will allow these terrific projects to redistribute even more perfectly good food, making sure it ends up where it belongs – on people's plates and stomachs.

Today's announcement comes in the run-up to [a major event 'Step up to the Plate'](#) at London's prestigious Victoria and Albert Museum, hosted by the Environment Secretary and the government's [Food Surplus and Waste Champion](#) Ben Elliot on Monday 13 May. The event will run alongside the V&A's [FOOD: Bigger than the Plate](#) exhibition, and bring together big players from the worlds of food retail, hospitality, chefs and social media influencers to promote awareness of food waste and help drive it down from all sources.

Earlier this week, [the government published the pledge](#) which attendees will be expected to sign up to during the event, committing them to measure and reduce their own food waste and inspire others to follow their lead.

Food Surplus and Waste Champion Ben Elliot said:

Following a competitive bidding process, I am delighted to announce that these four brilliant organisations have been awarded with funding from the £15 million scheme announced back in January.

These organisations are on the frontline, working diligently towards a waste-less future by ensuring that perfectly good food does not end up in the bin. It's only right that this vital work is recognised accordingly.

Justin Byam Shaw, Founder of The Felix Project, said:

Now, with the government behind us, The Felix Project can help lead the way in getting this mountain of great, surplus food to those who really need it.

Jo Hercberg, founder of Food Works Sheffield, said:

At Food Works Sheffield we believe in building a fairer and more sustainable food system. A big part of this is reducing food waste so being awarded some of the Food Waste Fund will really help us achieve this goal in 2019. As a relatively small and new project we're delighted to have been considered alongside the large national organisations.

Company Shop Group Managing Director Jane Marren said:

We are delighted to have won Defra's backing to implement our Harnessing Harder to Reach Surplus project, which will enable Company Shop Group to deploy a specialist team of surplus intervention experts to work with food industry partners to find solutions to complex surplus challenges.

Company Shop Group – with five decades of experience in food redistribution – has the technical infrastructure, capabilities and expertise to unlock more surplus stock and reduce the amount of good food that goes to waste.

This project will achieve long-term environmental benefits; it will help the supply chain to maximise the value of their products, and it will deliver clear and tangible social impact.

The government's [£15 million scheme](#) to tackle food waste builds on its landmark [Resources and Waste Strategy](#), which sets out how the government will introduce annual reporting of food surplus and waste by food businesses.

Should progress be insufficient, we will consult on seeking legal powers to introduce mandatory targets for food waste prevention.

The Resources and Waste Strategy also sets out how the government will ensure weekly collections of food waste, which is often smelly and unpleasant, for every household – restoring weekly collections in some local authorities, subject to consultation.

The government is committed to supporting the [United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal 2 to end hunger by 2030](#).

Further information

- A food redistribution organisation is one that collects surplus food from food businesses and delivers it to those who have a need.
- The redistribution organisations receiving funding are Fareshare, Company Shop Group, The Felix Project and Food Works Sheffield, giving a combined award of £4.2 million.
- Applicants were required to demonstrate how they will help food businesses reduce their surplus in the long term.
- In 2017, [205,000 tonnes of surplus food in the retail and food manufacturing sectors was wasted](#). Some of the surplus is difficult to minimise, costly in that it would need to be reworked or repackaged, and some surplus would not be edible. It is estimated by WRAP that 100,000 tonnes of this is both accessible and edible with the remaining being more difficult to redistribute.
- Food waste in the UK totals 10.2 million tonnes per year, of which 1.8 million tonnes comes from food manufacture, 1 million from the hospitality sector, and 260,000 from retail, with the remainder from households.
- Food businesses interested in redistributing surplus food can contact their local redistribution organisation to see how they can help.
- The scheme is a pilot which will run in 2019/20, drawing on £15 million of additional funding the Treasury have allocated to Defra to tackle food waste. Any future funding would be subject to the Spending Review.
- [FOOD: Bigger than the Plate](#) [18 May – 20 October 2019] will explore how innovative individuals, communities and organisations are radically re-inventing how we grow, distribute and experience food. Taking visitors on a sensory journey through the food cycle, from compost to table, it poses questions about how the collective choices we make can lead to a more sustainable, just and delicious food future in unexpected and playful ways.